

harmony with the spirit of the East, but no less certainly wearisome and absurd ; and he needlessly introduces a crude supernatural machinery which we like none the better for being told in the preface that it is ' cabalistical and correct.' Disraeli had to pay for the faults of his education, and the mysticism which was such a marked feature of his character, and which on its higher and imaginative side was a source of power and insight, too often degenerated into a taste for mere hocus-pocus.

But the most obvious defect of the novel is the style in which it is written. In *Contarini* we had a strain of fervid rhetoric rarely without distinction. In *Alroy* we get in its place a sort of prose poetry which the author only adopted, as he tells us in the preface to the original edition, ' after long meditation and a severe examination of its qualities.' His tale is 'essentially dramatic,' and therefore he introduces ' occasional bursts of lyric melody for that illustrative music without which all dramatic representations are imperfect.' His subject is essentially poetical, and therefore

I never hesitate although I discard verse to have recourse to rhythm whenever I consider its introduction desirable, and occasionally even to rhyme. There is no doubt that the style in which I have attempted to write this book is a delicate and difficult instrument for an artist to handle. He must not abuse his freedom. He must alike beware the turgid and the bombastic, the meagre and the mean. He must be easy in Ms robes of state, and a degree of elegance and dignity must accompany him even in the camp and the market house. The language must rise gradually with the rising passions of the speakers and subside in harmonious unison with their sinking emotions.

Whether it would ever be possible to use such an instrument with effect it is not necessary to inquire ; suffice it to say that Disraeli has not succeeded. "When he tries to be most impressive he is often simply grotesque, and at times we ask in amazement if his sense of the ridiculous has wholly deserted him. Take for instance such a piece of intolerable bombast as the following : —